

## I. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-16. (Previously canceled)

17. (Allowed) An isolated DNA consisting essentially of a nucleotide sequence encoding a protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said protein has transaldolase enzymatic activity.

18. (Allowed) An isolated DNA consisting of a nucleotide sequence encoding a protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said protein has transaldolase enzymatic activity.

19. (Allowed) The isolated DNA of claim 17, wherein said DNA has the complete nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 nucleotides 2471 to 3550.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Canceled)

22. (Allowed) An isolated DNA comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1 nucleotides 2471 to 3550, and the full complement of SEQ ID NO:1 nucleotides 2471 to 3550.

23. (Allowed) An isolated DNA comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:1, the full complement of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and the full complement of SEQ ID NO:3.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) An isolated ~~DNA~~ nucleic acid encoding a protein having transaldolase enzymatic activity with an amino acid sequence that is at least 90% identical to that of SEQ ID NO:2 and wherein said transaldolase enzymatic activity is essentially the

same as that of the protein of SEQ ID NO:2 or the same as that of the protein encoded by pSUZ1 shown in figure 1 and as found in *Escherichia coli* JM109/pSUZ1 deposited under accession number DSM 13263.

26. (Currently Amended) An isolated ~~DNA~~ nucleic acid encoding a protein having transaldolase enzymatic activity with an amino acid sequence that is at least 95% identical to that of SEQ ID NO:2 and wherein said transaldolase enzymatic activity is essentially the same as that of the protein of SEQ ID NO:2 or the same as that of the protein encoded by pSUZ1 shown in figure 1 and as found in *Escherichia coli* JM109/pSUZ1 deposited under accession number DSM 13263.

27. (Currently Amended) A vector comprising the isolated DNA of any one of claims ~~17-20, 22-26~~ 17-19, 22, and 23.

28. (Currently Amended) A host cell comprising the isolated DNA of any one of claims ~~17-20 and 22-26~~ 17-19, 22, and 23.

29. (Previously Added) A bacterium transformed with the vector of claim 27.

30. (Currently Amended) A vector for expressing the transaldolase protein of *Corynebacterium glutamicum* comprising a promoter and a coding sequence, wherein said coding sequence consists of the isolated DNA of any one of claims ~~17-20, 22-26~~ 17-19, 22 and 23.

31 (Previously canceled)

32. (Previously Added) A bacterium transformed with the vector of claim 30.

33. (Allowed) The bacterium of claim 32 wherein said bacterium is *Escherichia coli* JM109/pSUZ1 deposited under accession number DSM 13263.

34. (New) A vector comprising the isolated DNA of any one of claims 25 and 26.
35. (New) A host cell comprising the isolated DNA of any one of claims 25 and 26.
36. (New) A bacterium transformed with the vector of claim 34.
37. (New) A vector for expressing the transaldolase protein of *Corynebacterium glutamicum* comprising a promoter and a coding sequence, wherein said coding sequence consists of the isolated DNA of any one of claims 25 and 26.
38. (New) A bacterium transformed with the vector of claim 37.
39. (New) The bacterium of claim 38 wherein said bacterium is *Escherichia coli* JM109/pSUZ1 deposited under accession number DSM 13263.